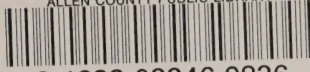


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The Exterior and Interior Bounds
of
Hunterdon County
New Jersey

By Oscar M. Voorhees, LL.D.

Flemington, N. J.
Hiram E. Deats
1929

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The exterior and interior bounds of Hunterdon County, New Jersey, by Oscar Voorhees, LL.D. Flemington, N. J., H. E. Deats, 1929.

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Exterior and Interior Bounds
of
Hunterdon County, N. J.

THE EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR BOUNDS OF HUNTERDON COUNTY

BY OSCAR M. VOORHEES, LL.D., NEW YORK CITY

HUNTERDON IS ONE of the larger counties of New Jersey. It occupies the central-western portion of the State. In stating its boundaries, we begin at a point about ten miles south of Phillipsburg, where the Musconetcong flows into the Delaware; thence south along the Delaware for about twenty-five miles to a point below Lambertville, where it meets the Mercer county line; thence eastward along an irregular line that follows quite generally the southern crest of the Sourland Range to the so-called "Keith Line," that was surveyed in 1687 to divide East New Jersey from West New Jersey; thence northward along said East and West Jersey line for about thirty miles to the falls of the Lamington, near the present village of Pottersville; thence northwesterly to the Musconetcong, a distance of about ten miles, and thence about twenty miles along the Musconetcong in a southwesterly direction to the place of beginning. It has Pennsylvania as its western neighbor, Mercer county on the South, Somerset county on the East, and Morris and Warren counties on the North.

These boundaries, except for the Delaware and its tributary, the Musconetcong, seem quite illogical. They can only be understood from a study of the historic incidents that led to their adoption.

The importance of such a study is made evident by a discussion until recently in progress to determine whether a certain bridge is wholly in Hunterdon, or on the border line dividing the county from Somerset, and hence the joint responsibility of the two counties.

NEW JERSEY DIVIDED

The location of many division lines in New Jersey grew out of the fact that the Province belonged to two proprietors, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret, who could not always hold it jointly. The need of a division became pressing in 1680, when, on the death of Lord Berkeley, his heirs and as-

signs must needs know the limits of their estate so that they could give titles to those portions of East New Jersey for which they found purchasers. Even before his death a partition line was suggested, but it was not accepted because it would divide the Province into North and South, and not into East and West sections, as originally contemplated.

The movement for the division of the Province into East New Jersey and West New Jersey was begun in earnest in 1686, and resulted in the survey of the Keith Line from the south partition point at Little Egg Harbour, to the south branch of the Raritan near the present village of Three Bridges.

It had been denominated in the bond—the famous “quinti-partite deed of division”—that this line should extend straight on to the “north partition point” on the Delaware, where the line that was to separate New York from New Jersey would reach that river. As it proved, the initial direction veered too far to the west to make an equitable division. Hence, on the protest of West Jersey Proprietors, the line was not surveyed beyond the South Branch river. The following year an irregular line was accepted by the Governors of the respective Provinces, who met in London and parcelled out on an imperfect map lands in a Province 3,000 miles away, of which neither of them had real knowledge. Thus the Coxe-Barclay agreement fixed the line that separates Hunterdon from Somerset to this day.

For an extended discussion of this subject the reader is referred to the writer's paper on the East and West New Jersey Boundary Line Controversy, read before the Hunterdon County Historical Society in 1906, and printed in pamphlet form.

For half a century or more no uniform method of fixing township and county boundaries was recognized. At times the Crown assumed responsibility and erected townships by Royal Patent. At other times the Assembly of the Province acted, especially in setting up county boundaries, and, at a later date, township boundaries as well. For the latter the Justices and Freeholders at times took action. But the theory seems

to have been that their decisions must receive confirmation, either by the Crown, or the General Assembly before they could have full validity. We shall find the Crown and the Assembly sharing responsibility for determining the bounds of Hunterdon.

THE COUNTY ACT OF 1710

The first general "County Act" was passed by the New Jersey Assembly on January 21, 1709/10. It is entitled "An Act for dividing and ascertaining the boundaries of all the counties in this Province"—counties already existent but not sufficiently defined. By this Act the bounds of Bergen, Essex, Somerset, Middlesex and Monmouth counties in East New Jersey, and Burlington, Gloucester, Salem, and Cape May in West New Jersey were determined, though in language far from definite. Respecting Burlington, after describing the line that separates it from Gloucester on the south, the Act reads thus: "Thence along the sea coast to the line of partition between East and West Jersey [at Little Egg Harbour]; thence along the said line of partition by Maidenhead and Hopewell to the northernmost and uttermost bounds of the township of Amwell; thence by the same to the river Delaware; thence by the river Delaware to the first mentioned station."

AMWELL TOWNSHIP

But where was Amwell and what were its boundaries? For many years its origin was a mystery and its exterior bounds were only partially understood. Encouraged by an incidental reference in Lee's "New Jersey as a Colony and as a State," I went to Trenton and copied the Royal Patent. At once some historical mysteries were revealed. So far as I am aware it has not hitherto been published. It reads as follows (verbatim et literatim):

"ANNE: By the grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland Queen Defender of the faith et. To all to whom these presents shall come or may concern. GREETING Know ye that of our speshall grace our certain knowledge

and mere motion have granted and by these presents do grant for us our heirs and successors to the men and inhabitants and their successors inhabiting above the uppermost bounds of that Tract of Land commonly known by the name of the thirty thousand ackers in the county of Burlington in the Western Division of our province of New Jersey on the eastern shore of Dellawar River begining at the line of the land commonly known by the name of the thirty thousand ackers and thence running as high as the upper end of Mauanissing [spelling uncertain] from thence with a north east course to the line of partition between the Eastern and Western Divisions of the province aforesaid Soe along the partition line to the line of the thirty thousand ackers Thence running along the line of the thirty thousand ackers to the River Dellawar where it first Began To be and remain a perpetual township or community in word and deed to be called and known by the name of the Township of Amwell and we further grant to the inhabitants of the said township aforesaid and their successors to chuse annually a constable overseer of the poor and overseer of the highways for the Township aforesaid and to enjoy all the privileges Rights liberties and Immunities that any other Township in our said province does or may of Right enjoy and the said inhabitants are hereby constituted and appointed a township by the name aforesaid to have and enjoy the priviledges aforesaid to them and their successors forever. In Testimony whereof we have caused these our letters to be made pattent Witness our Right Trusty and Right Wellbeloved Cousen Edward Viscount of Cornbury our Captain General and Governor in chief in and over our province of New Jersey New York and all the Territories and Tracts of land depending thereon in America and Vice Admiral of the same on this eighth day of June in the Seventh year of our Reigne Annoq. Dom. 1708."

It will be noted that the date of this Patent is June 8, 1708, a year and a-half before the date of the county Act quoted above, by which the northern boundary of Amwell township was made the northern boundary of Burlington county. Evidently the territory farther north was not then sufficiently occupied to make definite civil boundaries necessary. But adventurers were pushing into it, and this unorganized condition could not continue.

It will be noted, also, that the Patent here quoted describes the southern boundary of Amwell as the northern boundary

of a tract known as the "30,000 acres." It will be sufficient to state here that this tract forms a goodly portion of the township of Hopewell, now in Mercer county.

Respecting the northern, or more properly the northwestern, boundary of Amwell the portion running from the Delaware by a "northeast course" to the South Branch of the Raritan is well known, for it still divides Delaware and Raritan townships on the southeast from Kingwood and Franklin on the northwest.

There is no evidence that the line was ever surveyed beyond the South Branch. It was the intention, I believe, that it should meet the Lamington at the falls near Pottersville. If this is the case, the entire eastern line of Amwell from that point south was the eastern line of Hunterdon, as described above. Amwell as patented contained nearly one-half of the present county. It comprised all of the present East Amwell, West Amwell, Delaware, Raritan and Readington townships, and, in addition, goodly portions of Clinton and Tewksbury—an area of about 130,000 acres, or 200 square miles. This was the Amwell of 1708, as erected by Royal Patent, all within the bounds of Burlington county as then defined.

HUNTERDON'S ORIGINAL BOUNDARIES

For the first mention of Hunterdon county I refer to the Act of the New Jersey Assembly passed on March 11, 1713/14, for the purpose of "erecting the upper parts of the western division of New Jersey into a county." It reads as follows:

"That all and singular the lands, the upper parts of the said western division of the province of New Jersey lying northwards of, or situated above the brook or riverlet commonly called Assunpink, be erected into a county, and it is hereby erected into a county named, and from henceforth to be called the county of Hunterdon; and the said brook or riverlet, commonly known and called by the name of Assunpink, shall be the boundary line between the county of Burlington and the said county of Hunterdon."

It is a curious fact that in the "Journal of the Governor and Council" no minute appears in confirmation of this Act, al-

though there is a reference to the preparation of "An Ordinance for the establishing of Courts of Judicature in the County of Hunterdon." This, under date of Wednesday, was on the 10th of March, 1714, a year and a day (or was it only a day) previous to the passage of the Act erecting the county. That the inhabitants of the new county were required to wait before royal approval of this Act was secured seems evident, for no representative from Hunterdon appeared in the Assembly until 1727. During those thirteen years the inhabitants were reckoned among the citizens of Burlington. The Court minutes of Hunterdon, however, begin Tuesday, June 1, 1714.

General Robert Hunter had been Governor of the Provinces of New York and New Jersey less than four years when the new county was named in his honor. How frequently he had visited the territory to which his name was then attached we may not know. He evidently knew of it through a trusted member of his Council, John Reading. It may be that Reading suggested the name.

It will be noted that the southern boundary of the new county—the Assunpink Creek, that flows into the Delaware at Trenton—is only about seven miles long; so near did the East and West Jersey boundary line approach the Delaware at that point. Northward the county extended far beyond the bounds of Burlington as hitherto described. It included all the territory now comprised in Hunterdon, Morris, Sussex and Warren counties, and a considerable portion of the present Mercer county to the South.

After 1727 Hunterdon county enjoyed all the privileges accorded to the older counties. The county seat was at Trenton, but the center of influence north of the Sourland Range seems to have been at Ringoes. The far northern portion was in those days but sparsely inhabited.

MORRIS COUNTY FORMED.

The distance of that extended northern section from the county seat at Trenton led to the next act of division. At a meeting of the Provincial Assembly held at Perth Amboy on February 1, 1738/9, Lewis Morris being Governor, "A Peti-

tion of Sundry Inhabitants of the counties of Hunterdon and Essex was presented to the House and read, praying that this House will be pleased to assent to erecting the northern-most parts of the county of Hunterdon, Roxiticus in the county of Essex, and Basking Ridge in the county of Somerset, into a new county."¹

The petition was favorably considered, but, when the bill for the purpose was perfected, it gave cold comfort to these signers from Essex and Somerset, for its title is "An Act for erecting the upper parts of the county of Hunterdon in the western division of New Jersey into a county."² The Act, passed March 15, 1738-39, reads in part as follows:

"That all and singular the lands and upper parts of the said Hunterdon County, lying to the northward and eastward, situated and lying to the eastward of a well known place in the county of Hunterdon, being a fall of water in part of the North Branch of the Raritan river called in the Indian language, or known by the name of Alamatunk, to the northeastward of the northeast end, or part of, the lands called the New Jersey Society lands, along the lines thereof, crossing the South Branch of the Raritan river, and extending westerly to a certain tree, marked with the letters L. M. [Lewis Morris] standing on the north side of a brook emptying itself into the said South Branch, by an old Indian path, to the northward of a line to be run northwest from the said tree to a branch of Delaware river called Musconetcong, and so down the said branch to Delaware river; all which said lands, being to the eastward, northward, and northeastward of the above said boundaries, be erected into a county, and it is hereby erected into a county, named and from henceforth to be called Morris county, and the said bounds shall part and from henceforth separate and divide the same from the said Hunterdon county."

The new county, that took from Hunterdon nearly two-thirds of its original territory, was named in honor of Lewis Morris, who had but six months previously received his commission as the first Governor of New Jersey as separate from New York. The line established by the above-recited Act has

¹N. J. Colonial Documents, Vol. 15, p. 32.

²General Statutes of N. J., I, p. 1000. See also reference above, p. 79.

remained the northern boundary of Hunterdon ever since, though the territory north of it has borne different names. For fourteen years—from 1739 until 1753—it was all Morris county. In the latter year Sussex was formed, and continued to be Hunterdon's northern neighbor across the Musconetcong for over seventy-one years, until 1824, when Warren was formed and took the place of Sussex as its principal northern neighbor.

MERCER COUNTY FORMED

The removal of the county seat in ~~1785~~ from Trenton to a more central point—Flemington—no doubt had something to do with the next excision from Hunterdon's territory. This was by the erection of a new county to the south, which was named after General Hugh Mercer, who fell at Princeton, on January 2, 1777. This work was done piecemeal, for three Legislative Acts were necessary to give Mercer her present bounds. The first Act, passed February 22, 1838, joined portions of Burlington, Middlesex, and Hunterdon counties, making the road leading from Rocky Hill through Pennington to Titusville the northern boundary of Mercer, and consequently the southern boundary of Hunterdon. A supplement that became a law five days later added a portion of Somerset to the new county, while a further supplement, passed nearly a year later, i. e., February 14, 1839, completed the process that has confined Hunterdon within her present bounds. This Act I quote:

"That all that part of the county of Hunterdon, embraced within the limits of the township of Hopewell, shall be, and the same is hereby attached to, and made a part of the county of Mercer, and shall be subject to all the laws which the county of Mercer now is or may be subject to; and the boundary line between the said township of Hopewell and the township of Amwell, in the county of Hunterdon, shall be hereafter the boundary line between the county of Mercer and the county of Hunterdon."³

Thus the ancient limits of the "30,000 acres" came to shut in Hunterdon on the south, as it is to this day.

³General Statutes of N. J., p. 1007.

RESPECTING ISLANDS IN THE DELAWARE

The process thus far traced has been one entirely of excision or subtraction. Hunterdon was in every instance the loser. There is, however, one occasion when the county was the gainer by an addition of territory. This must be recounted to make clear how it came to its present limits.

It seems that there were islands in the Delaware, the owners and inhabitants of which were uncertain whether they owed allegiance to New Jersey or Pennsylvania. Hence commissions were appointed by these States to determine and report on the matter, and on March 16, 1786, an Act was passed by the Legislature confirming the report of this joint commission. I quote the title of the Act, and that portion of it that relates to Hunterdon county:

"An Act to ratify and confirm an agreement made between the Commissioners appointed by the Legislature of the State of Pennsylvania and the Commissioners appointed by the Legislature of the State of New Jersey for the purpose of agreeing upon and accurately describing which of the islands, inlets and insulated drylands mentioned in the agreement between the two States, bearing date on the 26th day of April, 1783, belong to each of the said States, according to the purport of that agreement."

From the Act itself I quote:

"And that the following islands, opposite to the county of Hunterdon in the State of New Jersey and the townships hereafter named, that is to say, opposite to the township of Trenton, Yard's island, Mott's two islands, Gould's two islands; opposite to the township of Hopewell, Stout's island; opposite to the township of Amwell, Smith's Mill island, Coryell's island, Holcombe's two islands, Eagle island and Bull's island; opposite to the township of Kingwood, Rush island, Ridge's island, Shyhawk's three islands, Pinkerton's island and Man-of-war island; opposite to the township of Alexandria, Stull's island, Lowney's island, Loughley's island and bar, . . . shall be annexed to the State of New Jersey.⁴ . . .

"That all islands islets and dryland, annexed to the jurisdiction of this state . . . shall hereafter be deemed and consid-

⁴Snell's "History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties," p. 190.

ered as parts and parcels of such counties and townships to which said islands, or insulated dry land do or doth lie nearest, . . . and the proprietors, or owners thereof, shall be subject to the payment of taxes for the said islands in the said counties and townships accordingly."

In this connection it should be stated that the islands adjoining the townships of Trenton and Hopewell were mentioned as included in the territory set off to form the county of Mercer.

One further effort was made to reduce the size of Hunterdon county, but it did not permanently succeed. This was the setting off in 1844 of Tewksbury township and joining it to Somerset. In Snell's "History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties" it is stated that "this was a political measure; hence was but a temporary transfer." Just what political purpose it was thought to serve I am unable at present to state. Daniel Haines, a Democrat, was Governor, but the Whigs had captured the Legislature after their opponents had been in control but one year. Hence it was a Whig Legislature that sought to despoil the county. It was the year of the Constitutional Convention, which proved, it would seem, a love feast, and led to more conciliatory measures. At any rate the next winter, the Whigs, finding themselves in control, both in the Executive and Legislative departments, promptly undid the work of the previous winter and restored Tewksbury to her West Jersey mooring. Since then, so far as I am aware, no effort has been made to change the exterior bounds of old Hunterdon.

THE WEST JERSEY SOCIETY

Though the "County Act" quoted above fixes the northern boundary of Burlington county as the northern boundary of Amwell township, it seems evident that all of West Jersey to the north was considered as belonging to Burlington, since no other civil connection was available. In proof of this I cite the statement in the deed of the West Jersey's Society's Great Tract, the story of which was prepared for the Hunterdon County Historical Society by the late Henry Race, M. D.,

and later printed in "The Jerseyman" of April, 1895. A bit of speculation in West Jersey lands is involved, in which Dr. Daniel Coxe of London, physician to Queen Catherine, wife of Charles II, and later to Queen Anne, who came to the throne in 1701, was the chief factor. In February, 1686, he purchased five whole shares—five one-hundredths, or one-twentieth of the Province of West Jersey. By other purchases he believed himself to be and was in fact the chief Proprietor of West Jersey, and as such claimed to be its Governor. This was a year before George Keith surveyed the East and West Jersey boundary line—the so-called Keith Line; two years before Somerset was made a county; and a like period before the Coxe-Barclay agreement already mentioned for partitioning the Province. Early in 1692 he organized in London the West Jersey Society, and sold to it for £9,000 all his property in the colony except "that tract of land lying about the falls of the Delaware [at Trenton] in West New Jersey, . . . containing by estimation 60,000 acres" [i. e., two shares] and two other tracts previously conveyed. Part of this 60,000 acres was evidently the 30,000 acres in Hopewell—the whole township in fact, the northern boundary of which was the southern boundary of Amwell as described above. This tract had been surveyed in 1688 by Daniel Leeds.

About fifty men joined in forming the West Jersey Society, each holding from 10 to 100 of the 1,600 shares. Doctor Coxe held the larger number.

In 1708 Lewis Morris was authorized to take up a tract of 100,000 acres from the territory north of Amwell. In June, 1711, a survey was made, also by Daniel Leeds, and later accepted, and recorded in the Surveyor-General's office in Burlington.⁵

This great tract extended from the Cushetunk mountain and the Lamington river on the east to the Delaware on the west, and is declared to be in the "county of Burlington." Hence Burlington was believed to extend north of the boundaries mentioned in the Act of 1710. Less than three years after

⁵"New Jersey Archives," Vol. VII, p. 325 ff.

this survey was made, Hunterdon county was formed, as we have seen, and the tract soon thereafter became known as the "West Jersey Society's Great Tract in Hunterdon County."

Although it is not so stated, I am quite of the opinion that the eastern boundary of this Great Tract, a part of which was the Cushetunk range, became in 1730 the western boundary of Reading township.

TOWNSHIPS FORMED—READING

It so happens that of the pre-Revolutionary townships of Hunterdon we have full knowledge of the erection of only one—Reading. It was constituted by a Royal Patent which bears date July 15, 1730. In it we find the authority of township officers set forth in terms quite similar to those used in the case of Amwell. As we are interested primarily in the boundaries of the new township, we need not quote it in full. The essential portions reads as follows:

"GEORGE, the Second by the grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith etc.:

"GREETING, KNOW YE that we of our Especial grace Certain Knowledge & Meer motion have Given and granted and by these presents, do give and grant for us our heirs and Successors to the men and their Successor Inhabitting the Eastern part of the Township of Amewell in the County of Hunterdon in the Western Division of the province of New Jersey, on the Eastern shoar of Delaware River, Beginning where the Division line of the Province crosseth the south branch of Raritan River [near the present Three Bridges], Thence up the Same to the upper line of a tract of land Commonly called the Lotting Purchase, then along the said line the course thereof to the South West end of a Mountain called in the Indian Tongue Kuoshantong to the Corner of an Indian purchase of lands made by Mr. George Willocks; thence along the upper line of the said purchase to the north branch of Rockawayock River, thence down the said branch the courses thereof to the line of land late the said Mr. George Willocks, thence along the said line Easterly till it intersects Allometunk branch, thence following down that Stream to the place where the said Division line of the province cometh thereto, thence along the said line to the place of beginning, To be and remain

a perpetual Township and Community in Word and Deed to be called and known by the Name of the Township of Reading."

It will be noted that Reading, or Readington—the present form is a shortening of "Reading Town"⁶—occupies the eastern portion of the county, and was taken from the northern portion of Amwell, with the South Branch as its southern boundary, and with lines bounding tracts already surveyed as its western border. This line may well be in whole or in part the eastern line of the West Jersey Society's Great Tract, as already stated.

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BETHLEHEM, LEBANON AND ALEXANDRIA TOWNSHIPS

It is a matter of regret that no records have been found to enable us to tell with definiteness of the process by which the remaining portion of Hunterdon was further divided into townships. After comparing the records available I conclude that that section of the county was divided into two townships at about the same time that Reading was formed, but whether by Royal Patent or by the Board of Justices and Freeholders remains uncertain.

A glance at the map makes it clear that in the section there is one natural boundary—the South Branch of the Raritan, which flows in a southerly direction toward the point where the Amwell line meets it near the present Sunnyside station on the Lehigh Valley Railroad. There it turns to the westward and later northward to meet the North Branch, the two forming the Raritan.

Near old Hampton an Indian path crossed the Musconetcong and ran up the slope and then through the gap in the Musconetcong range, through which the highway and the New Jersey Central Railroad now run, to the Spruce Run, and follows down this to Clinton where the Run joins the South Branch. This path, the Spruce Run and the South Branch, were early accepted as dividing the territory into two portions, and these were called Bethlehem and Lebanon respec-

⁶On Feb. 21, 1798, "Reading" was officially changed to "Readington."

tively, Bethlehem to the west and Lebanon to the east. When Bethlehem became a township we do not know, but about 1730 it has been conjectured. Lebanon was a township before 1734, for the record of the selection of township officers on March 17 of that year is preserved.⁷

This record shows that the township was then fully organized, but gives no inkling as to its beginnings. Dr. Goddard, in his "County and Municipal Corporations," gives Lebanon as incorporated (approximately) Oct. 26, 1731.

Before the Revolution two additional townships were carved out of Bethlehem and one out of Lebanon. Respecting the first—Kingwood—cut off from the southern section of Bethlehem, accurate records are not available. Its date is given as about 1749, and the line of division runs in a slightly curved line from the present borough of Frenchtown on the Delaware to the South Branch at the present town of Clinton.

In 1765 Bethlehem was shorn of another third of her territory by the erection of Alexandria township, which extended northwestward from Kingwood to include the far western portion of the county. We are told that this act of partition was executed by the Board of Justices and Freeholders on March 5, 1765, and the township named in honor of James Alexander (father of William Alexander, the Earl of Stirling), who had secured in 1744 a tract of 10,000 acres, a goodly portion of the Society's Great Tract.

This is the first and only instance of action by local authority in setting up a new township in Hunterdon of which a record has been preserved.

TEWKSBURY TOWNSHIP

Ten years before Alexandria was set off from Bethlehem, Lebanon township was similarly despoiled by the setting apart of about a third of its territory to form the township of Tewksbury. Fortunately the record is definite, as we know from the minutes of the first town meeting held at the "school house," evidently in New Germantown, on March 11, 1755.

⁷See Snell's "History of Hunterdon and Somerset Counties," p. 446.

held "pursuant to a Patent granted for the said Township by His Excellency, Jonathan Belcher, Esq., Our Excellent Governor."

It is evident that Tewksbury was taken from Lebanon, with Reading on the south, the Lamington on the east, and the Morris county line on the north as far as the South Branch, and then that stream to the present village of Califon on the west. What gave significance to the remaining line on the southwest by which it was separated from Lebanon is not so evident, for there is no natural boundary. It may be presumed that a series of lines separating tracts already surveyed was accepted as reasonably satisfactory. The bounds of Tewksbury have remained practically unchanged.

A significant sentence in the minutes of that first town meeting deserved to be quoted: "The town voted . . . that the patent should be paid for out of the surplusage of the money raised on the town if so much shall remain after the tax shall be paid the county collector." This would seem to indicate that granting petitions for the setting up of townships inured to the income of the Crown, if indeed any share of it got beyond the Governor, who by his signature gave the patent validity.

The record states that the patent fee "was paid in the year 1756." We may wonder if the Crown waited so long for the fee, or if interested parties forwarded the amount, taking chances as to being reimbursed.

Thus during the Revolutionary period Hunterdon, as now bounded, was divided into seven townships, viz., Amwell on the south, Reading, Lebanon and Tewksbury on the northeast, and Bethlehem, Alexandria and Kingwood on the northwest. There were, in addition, three townships to the south, in that portion of the county now a part of Mercer county—Maidenhead, February 20, 1697; Hopewell, February 20, 1700; and Trenton, June 3, 1719.

NEW TOWNSHIPS UNDER STATEHOOD

It was more than half a century after New Jersey became one of the United States, and its government was begun under

the Constitution of 1776, before the passion for division broke out afresh. Of the result I can speak but briefly.

Amwell was the first township to feel its effects, for in 1838 its territory was divided into three portions by a line running in a northeasterly direction from the Delaware to the East and West Jersey boundary line near the present village of Clover Hill. South of this line was Amwell; to the northwest, Delaware; and to the northeast, Raritan with Flemington, the county seat, about centrally located. Eight years later Amwell was divided again, into West Amwell and East Amwell.

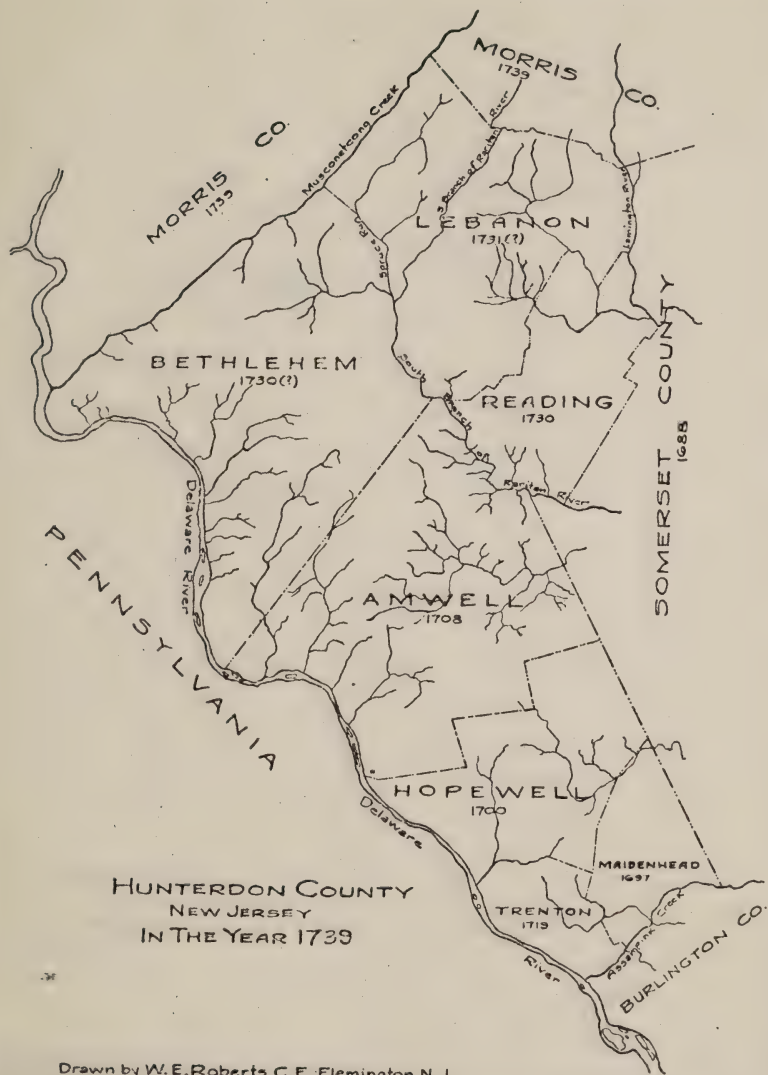
In 1841 Lebanon was bisected, the southern portion receiving the name Clinton, with the village, now town of Clinton, on its western border.

Thirty years later a third township—High Bridge—was sandwiched in between Lebanon and Clinton, made up of territory taken from each. In 1898 most of this territory was restored to its earlier allegiance; all except that comprised in the new borough of High Bridge.

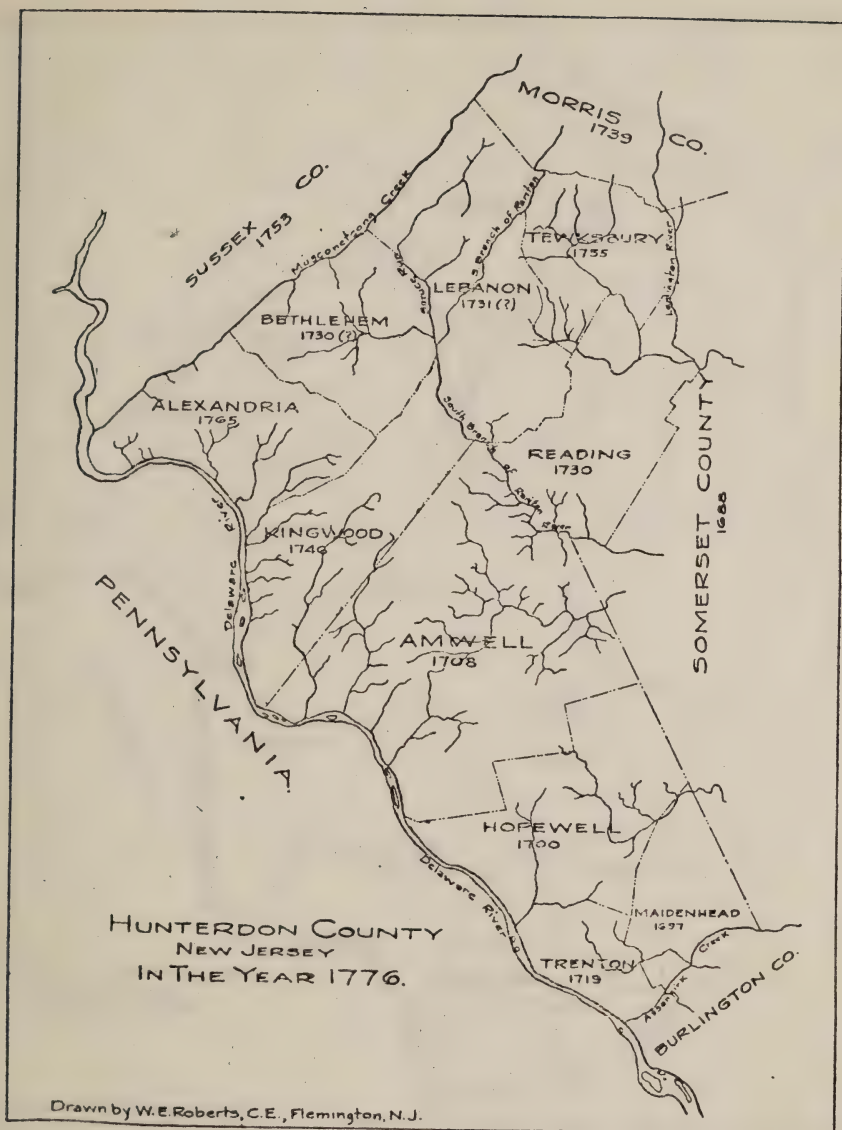
In 1845 Kingwood was divided, the northeastern section being named Franklin.

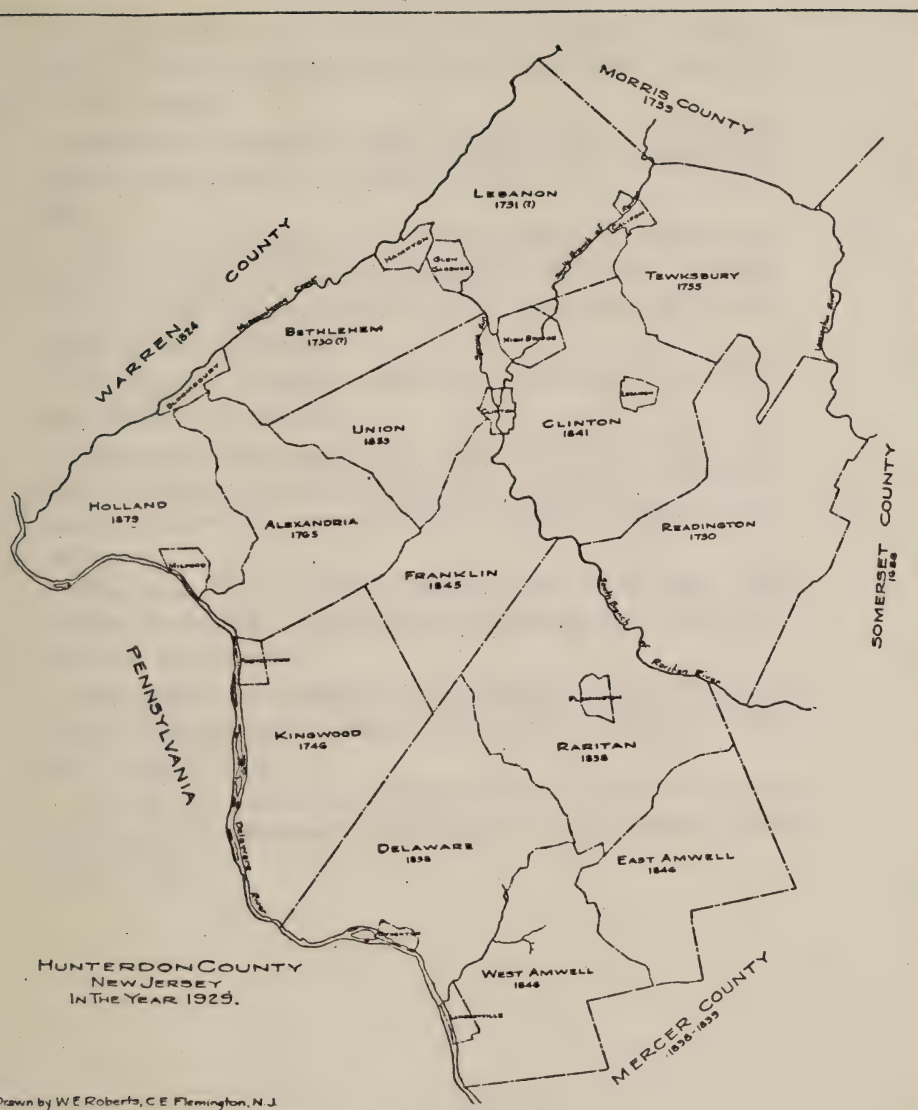
Eight years later—in 1853—Bethlehem was again divided, the southern portion being named Union, as it comprised the ancient Union Iron Works and the Union Farm that were so widely known during the Revolutionary period. Thus Bethlehem, at one time comprising more than a third of the county, was crowded to the north, and now lies astride the Musconetcong range, only a shadow of its former splendid self.

In 1879 Alexandria suffered from the same spirit of division, when the far western section was made into a township and named Holland. Thus the seven townships became fourteen, all by legislative enactments. Readington and Tewksbury are the only townships whose bounds have remained unchanged.



Drawn by W. E. Roberts, C. E. Flemington, N. J.







SMALLER MUNICIPALITIES

To make our story complete it is necessary to mention municipalities of smaller area, though not of less importance on that account.

Hunterdon has but one city—Lambertville. It was given a town government in 1849 and became a city on March 26, 1872.

Clinton is the oldest town in the county, its charter dating from 1865. In the Act creating it the terms "borough or town corporate" are used, but it was "to be called and known as the 'Town of Clinton.'"

Frenchtown, organized only two years later, has always been known as a borough.

Flemington, the county seat was a town from 1870 until 1894, when its government was reorganized and it became a village; by another reorganization in 1910 it became a borough.

The borough of Hampton Junction dates from 1895; High Bridge from 1898. The same year Stockton also was given a borough government.

Boroughs since created are Bloomsbury, 1905; Hampton, 1909; Milford, 1911; Califon, 1918; Glen Gardner, 1919; and Lebanon, 1926.

Within the bounds of old Hunterdon are now twenty-six municipalities—fourteen townships, one city, one town, and ten boroughs.

SMALLER MUNICIPALITIES

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Frenchtown, organized only two years later, has always been known as a borough.

By another reorganization in 1910 it became a borough. When its government was reorganized and it became a borough in 1890, the county seat was a town from 1870 until 1804.

The borough of Hampton Junction dates from 1805; High Bridge from 1898. The same year Stockton also was given a borough government.

Boroughs since created are Bloomington, 1902; Hampton, 1909; Milford, 1911; Clinton, 1918; Clinton, 1919; and Lebanon 1920.

Within the bounds of old Hunterdon are now twenty-two municipalities—fourteen townships, one city, one town, and five boroughs.

